

Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-10 ADP-00 SR-02 ORM-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-13 RSR-01 /130 W
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R 220810 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9449

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5798

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IN CH

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE DALAI LAMA VISIT TO ITALY AND VATICAN

1. RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED US THAT DALAI LAMA' S REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DURING PAST WEEK TO SOUND OUT ITALIANS ON POSSIBLE VISIT TO ITALY BY DALAI LAMA AT END OF SEPTEMBER. ACCORDING SOURCE, VISIT TO TAKE PLACE DURING PLANNED EUROPEAN TOUR TO INCLUDE STOPS IN UK, FRANCE, BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, FRG AND SWITZERLAND. OFFICIAL SAID ITALIANS WERE TOLD PURPOSE OF DALAI LAMA' S TRIP IS " RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL" AND WERE ASSURED THAT NO RPT NO POLITICAL ACTIVITY WOULD BE INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH DALAI LAMA WOULD EXPECT TO SEE TIBETAN REFUGEES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

2. OFFICIAL STATED THAT DALAI LAMA' S REP WAS TOLD THAT ITALIANS WILL STUDY REQUEST FOR VISIT; HE NOTED SUBJECT HAD ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED BY EC FAR EAST EXPERTS AND WAS AGAIN ON AGENDA FOR JULY
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EXPERTS MEETING. HE OBSERVED ITALIANS' PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS CHINESE SENSITIVITY, AND, IF GOI APPROVED VISIT, CHINESE WOULD BE PRE- ADVISED WITH APPROPRIATE EXPLANATION THAT VISIT NON- POLITICAL. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, SOURCES EXPRESSED VIEW THAT GIVEN DECLARED " RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL " PURPOSE OF VISIT, LAMA WOULD MOST LIKELY HAVE NO RPT NO CONTACTS WITH GOI OFFICIALS.

3. ACCORDING SOURCE, KEY FACTOR IN ITALIAN DECISION ON VISIT WILL BE WHETHER VATICAN DECIDES TO RECEIVE DALAI LAMA. HE SAID ITALIANS HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH VATICAN, AND HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT MATTER UNDER STUDY. SOURCE STATED THAT IF VATICAN AGREES TO RECEIVE LAMA, ITALIANS OBLIGATED BY LONG- STANDING AGREEMENT WITH VATICAN TO PERMIT DALAI LAMA' S ENTRY INTO ITALY, AND THIS SHOULD COVER GOI IF CHINESE OBJECT.

4. VATICAN SOURCES HAS CONFIRMED THAT REPRESENTATIVE OF DALAI LAMA HAS ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH WITH VATICAN IN ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE PAPAL AUDIENCE FOR LAMA. SINCE VATICAN UNWILLING TAKE STEP THAT MIGHT PREJUDICE EVENTUAL CONTACTS WITH PEKING, IT WAS EXPLAINED TO DALAI LAMA' S REPRESENTATIVE THAT ANY VISIT WOULD HAVE TO BE UN-OFFICIAL AND THAT IN SURROUNDING PUBLICITY, IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR THAT LAMA BEING RECEIVED ONLY AS RELIGIOUS AND NOT RPT NOT POLITICAL LEADER. VATICAN HAS BEEN INFORMED DALAI LAMA HAS NO RPT NO OBJECTIONS TO THESE CONDITIONS. WHILE NO RPT NO DECISION YET TAKEN, VATICAN INFORMED US THAT IT HIGHLY LIKELY WOULD RECEIVE LAMA SHOULD HE VISIT ROME. VOLPE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: willialc
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ROME05798
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730626/aaaajkct.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <29-Aug-2001 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980219
Subject: POSSIBLE DALAI LAMA VISIT TO ITALY AND VATICAN
TAGS: PFOR, CH, IN, n/a
To: BERN
BONN
BRUSSELS
EUR
HONG KONG
LONDON
NEW DELHI

PARIS
SECSTATE WASHDC

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005